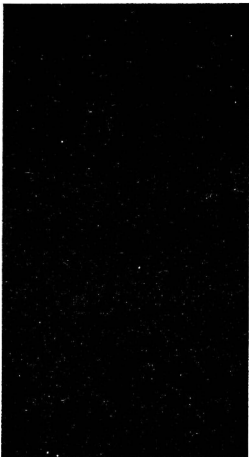


WINTER 1987

No. 3



BLAK

STAR

QUARTERLY ANARCHIST
JOURNAL OF THE ASU

BLAK STAR

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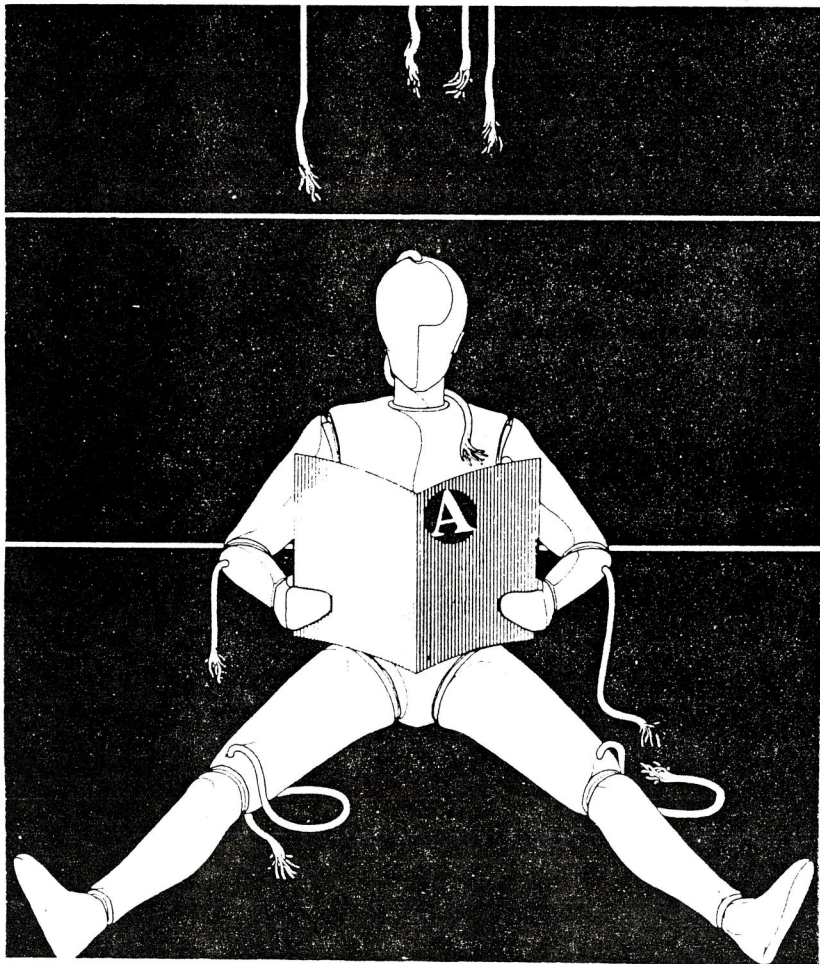
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ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP

WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

Anarchism and anarchists have historically been misrepresented to the world. The popular impression of an anarchist as an uncontrollably emotional, violent person who is only interested in destruction for its own

sake, and who is opposed to all forms of organisation, still persists.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to list the major elements of anarchist thought and to give examples of what some anarchists think about them. Unlike other streams of political thought, anarchists do not elevate certain texts or individuals above all others. There are different types of anarchists with many points of disagreement. The primary areas of debate among anarchists relate to what form of organisation should be struggled for and what tactics we should use.

This false impression persists primarily because people from across the political spectrum have been consciously promoting this lie for years. All who strive to gain power for themselves, whether they come from the right or the left, will always be threatened by anarchism. This is because anarchists feel that all authority and coercion must be rejected and struggled against at all times; and because anarchists reject hierarchical forms of organisation, and support organisational forms in which all people have an equal say based on voluntary mutual interests.

There have been anarchists who threw bombs and shot national leaders, but there have been many people who have done such things who were not anarchists (e.g. CIA agents) and there have been many anarchists who reject such tactics in particular situations.

In fact anarchists want to get rid of the greatest perpetrator of violence throughout history - the governments.

"What is this thing we call government? Is it anything else but organised violence? The law orders you to do this or not to do that, and if you fail to obey, it will compel you by force..... all government, all law and authority finally rest on force and violence, on punishment or fear of punishment."

Alexander Berkman

The anarchist case against violence:

"You can't blow up a social relationship. The total collapse of this society would provide no guarantee about what replaced it. Unless a majority of people had ideas and organisation sufficient for the creation of an alternative society, we would see the old world reassert itself because it is what people would be used to, what they believed in, what existed in their own personalities."

ORGANISATION

Anarchists are not opposed to organisation. In fact anarchism is primarily concerned with analyzing the way in which society is presently organised - i.e. government.

Anarchism is about organisation.
 - it is about alternative forms of organisation to what exist now.

Anarchism's opposition to authority leads to the view that organisations should be non-hierarchical and that membership should be voluntary. Anarchist organisation involves people coming together voluntarily on the basis of mutual needs and interests. Co-operation is the key element. A primary aim is that the individuals should speak and make decisions by themselves, and that all in the group be equally responsible for the group decisions.

Many anarchists would envisage large scale organisational needs in terms of small groups organised in the workplace, in your local area etc. who would send delegates to committees who would make decisions on matters of wider concern. The job of delegate would not be full-time, it would be rotated. The delegate would be unpaid, recallable and would voice the groups decisions. The various schools of anarchist differ in emphasis concerning organisation for example, anarchosyndacalists stress the revolutionary trade-union as the basic unit of organisation.

"..... administration of social and economic affairs will be carried out by small, local and functional groups demanding of the individual the minimum sacrifice of sovereignty necessary for a life that has been decentralised, de-bureaucratised, and highly simplified..... In this organic network of balancing interests, based on the natural urge of mutual aid, the artificial patterns of coercion will become unnecessary....."

From Anarchism
 by George Woodcock.

"I've heard that anarchist don't believe in organisation. I imagine that you have, but that's an old argument. Anyone who tells

you that anarchists don't believe in organisation is talking nonsense. . . But there is organisation and organisation. . . The organisation built on compulsion, which coerces and forces, is bad and unhealthy. The libertarian organisation, formed voluntarily and in which every member is free and equal, is a sound body and can work well. . . It is the kind of organisation that anarchists believe in.

From ABC of Anarchism
 by Alexander Berkman.

"Parliamentary institutions are rejected because they mean that the individual abdicates his sovereignty by handing it over to a representative; once he has done this, decisions may be reached in his name over which he no longer has any control. This is why anarchists regard voting as an act that betrays freedom, both symbolically and actually."

From Anarchism by
 George Woodcock.

PROPERTY

Most anarchists share with Marxists-Leninists an analysis of society based on class and economic relationships. Marxists and anarchists differ over the means by which capitalism should be done away with and over what should take its place.

THE STATE AND VANGUARD PARTIES

Marxist-Leninists want to replace the capitalist state and its ruling bourgeois class, with a revolutionary workers' state which will be run by themselves; that is the vanguard party which has led the workers into the revolution. They say that the party will run the state in the interests of the working class majority. It will be a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Anarchists are opposed to this state as much as any other. All states oppress the

individual whatever ideology they profess. Anarchists reject the leadership role of any vanguard party. A vanguard party represents authority and control.

Anarchists reject the key role seen for themselves in the future state. All such revolutions result in the development of a bureaucratic, professional, managerial, class who take over and rule in their own interest, with the ultimate aim of maintaining their own power.

In the here and now, members of such parties reinforce the individuals dependence of leaders and hierarchies and thus promote a sense of inadequacy, powerlessness and obedience in people. In the daily political struggle party matters tend to take up much of people's lives. Much time and resources are used maintaining and running the party machine.

Proponents of such dictatorships claim that the post-revolutionary state will gradually wither away. However party bureaucrats seem a little unclear as to when and how they will hand the power over.

NO GOD

Anarchist opposition to god is part of our criticism of the role that religion, morality, and ideologies play in controlling behaviour. Anarchists reject internal as well as external control mechanisms.

"Why, even spiritual authority, the authority of the church and of god rests on force and violence, because it is fear of divine wrath and vengeance that wields power over you, compels you to obey, and even to believe against your own reason."

A. Berkman

AUTHORITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Anarchists reject all authority. No person or group or ideology should attempt to control

the individual. Hand in hand with this rejection of authority goes a stress on individual responsibility. This involves not only the individual taking control of his/her own life, but also a responsibility not to impose on the lives of others but rather to co-operate. Thus it is to be distinguished from the cult of individualism in our capitalist society which is the ideological justification for cut throat competition and self interest at the expense of other people.

Anarchists are concerned about all aspects of life of an individual, socially as well as politically. The free society will involve fundamental personal changes in our values and ways of relating to each other, as well as economic and political changes. Anarchist practise and theory has suffered as a result of male domination, so far as the development of a critique of social and sexual relations is concerned. However an increasing interest in anarchism among feminists is resulting in an exciting blend; anarcho-feminism.

The well-established tradition of concern for the personal, every day life of the individual in anarchist thought, forms a strong base for this development.

"Authority controls our lives from the cradle to the grave - authority parental, priestly and divine, political, economic, social and moral. but whatever the character of the authority, it is always the same executioner wielding the power over you through your fear of punishment in one form or another. You are afraid of God and the devil, of the priest and the neighbour, of your employer and boss, of the politician and policeman, of the judge and the jailer, of the law and the government.... On these fears is based the authority of God, of the Church, of parents, of capitalist and ruler.

The right to compel you is called authority. Fear of punishment has been made into a

duty and is called obedience."

From ABC of Anarchism
by Alexandr Berkman

".....your existence is a continuous invasion and violation of yourself, a constant subjection to the thoughts and the will of someone else.

And as you are invaded and violated, so you subconsciously revenge yourself by invading and violating others over whom you have authority or can exercise compulsion, physical or moral, in this way all life has become a crazy quilt of authority, of domination and submission, of command and obedience, of coercion and subjection, of rulers and ruled, of violence and force in a thousand and one forms."

From ABC of Anarchism by Alexander Berkman

**"A splendid thing," you remark
"But will it work, and how shall we attain it?"**

HOW WILL REVOLUTION COME ABOUT?

We do not know. When a revolutionary situation presents itself - as it did in the occupation of the factories in France in 1968 (or 1936); as it did in Spain in 1936 with the fascist uprising; or with the breakdown of the Russian Armies in 1917; or in many other times and places; we are either ready for it, or we are not. Too often the workers are partially ready, and leave the 'wounded wild animal' of Capitalism or Statism fiercer than ever. It may be purely individual action that sets off the spark. But only if, at that period, there is a conscious movement towards a free society, that throws off the shackles of the past, will the situation become a Social Change.

BRINGING ABOUT THE NEW SOCIETY

What Constitutes an Authoritarian Society?

- exploitation
- manipulation
- suppression

The organs of repression, which consist of many arms of 'the Establishment', for example:

The Apparatus of Government - the legislature, the judiciary, the monarchy, the Civil Service, the Armed Forces, the police etc.

The Apparatus of Persuasion - the Church, the Press, TV, Radio, etc.

The Apparatus of Exploitation - the monetary system, the banks, financial control, the Stock Exchange, individual and collective and State employers.

Most political reforms have some part of the unfree system that they wish to abolish (Republicans would abolish the Monarchy; Secularists would abolish the Church; Socialists would, or used to wish to abolish the apparatus of exploitation and Pacifists would abolish the Army). Anarchists are in fact unique in wishing to abolish all. Nobody but the Anarchist wishes to abolish the police. The police (or the police in ultimate practice, which includes the the Armed Forces) are the cornerstone of the State. Without control of the police, debates at Westminster become as sterile of results as debates of the West Kensington Debating Society (and probably less interesting). With German money, supplied by Helphand Parvus, Lenin was able to return to Russia and to pay Lettish mercenaries to act as police. He was the only one who could do so and in this one fact Bolshevik success is constituted.

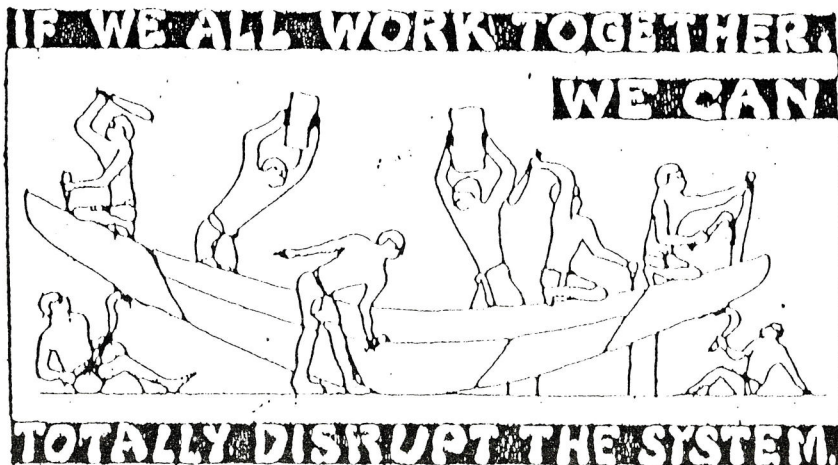
Can One Do Without The State?

It seems to be generally agreed that we can do without some organs of the State; can we do without them all, altogether? One cannot do the work of another (if the Monarchy does not have an army, it cannot save you from foreign invasion; and the police will not get you to heaven if you do not have a Church!). Any common sense codification of conduct would be better than the farrago of laws we have at present, which occupy both the lawyers and politicians, the one interpreting the apparent desires of the other.

It is true that the Government does take over certain necessary social functions. The railways were not always run by the State; they belonged to the capitalists, and could equally in a future society belong to the workers. Even the police at times fulfill some necessary functions: one goes to the police station to find lost dogs simply because it happens to be there. It does not follow that we should never find dogs if there were no policemen, and that we need to be clubbed over the heads in times of social unrest so that old ladies need not lose their dogs.

There was an old superstition that if the Church excommunicated a country, it was under a terrible disaster. One could not be

married, buried, leave property, do business in safety, be educated, be tended whilst sick, whilst the country was excommunicated. It was not an idle superstition: so long as people believed in the Church, if it banned the country from the communion of believers, the hospitals (run by the Church) were closed; there could be no trust in business (the clerics administered oaths); no education (they ran the schools); children could indeed be begotten, but not christened and were therefore barred from the community of believers; and unmarried parents could not leave their property to their illegitimate children. One did not need the physical reality of Hell to make excommunication effective. We are wiser now. But our superstition has been transferred to belief in the State. If we were to reject the State government there would be no education (for the government controls the schools), no hospitals (ditto); nobody could carry on working because the government regulates the means of exploitation, and so on. The truth all the time has been that not the Church and not the State but we the People have worked for everything we've got; and if we have not done so, they have not provided for us. Even the privileged class has been maintained by us not them.



The never changing
face of capitalism.



FLAG TORCH & FIST



THE SYMBOLS OF ANARCHISM

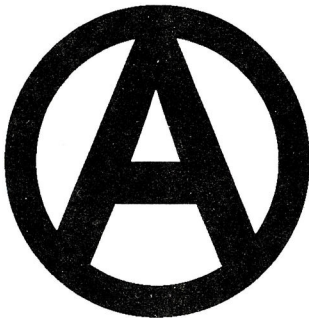
From the beginning anarchist symbolism has confined itself to the borrowing of individual symbols from the iconography of the international workers movement, and has merely varied these in colour to use them in its own propaganda. In this way the three anarchist tendencies (anarcho-communism / anarcho-syndicalism / anarcho-individualism) have all reached back for their symbols and not preferred one to another. An international comparison cannot show, though with perhaps one exemption, that any other specific symbols are being used. All anarchist symbols stand out because of their simplicity, which has greatly facilitated their spread.

BLACK: A common feature of the symbols used by anarcho-communists and -individualists is their pure black form. Black as a non-colour expresses the rejection for everything which, according to the anarchist social ideal, prevents or constrains universal freedom.

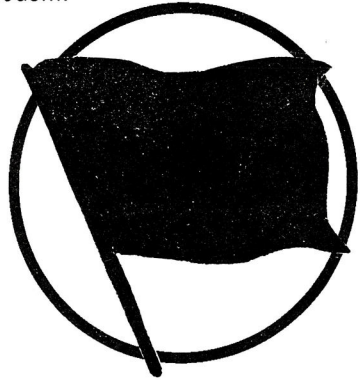
BLACK/RED: Only anarcho-syndicalists combine the anarchist black with the syndicalist red. Red, as an aggressive, active and energetic colour, symbolizes the determination of the syndicalist activist toward total social transformation.

A IN A CIRCLE: The  is seen as the most recent and, in terms of its impact, the most successful symbol in the whole field of political symbolism. Quite contrary to the widely held view that this is a traditional anarchist symbol it was first used in 1964 by the editorial collective of the French paper 'Jeunesses Libertaires' and was influenced by the death-rune-like Anti-Nuclear

Death symbol designed by the Englishman Gerald Horton. To some people it is simply a mark to indicate anarchist propaganda, to others it serves as a uniting symbol for all anarchist tendencies. No evidence has yet been found to support the common view that the **(A)** symbol is actually a very old and only recently rediscovered anarchist symbol. In particular the letter 'A' assisted the symbol's rapid world wide spread. The word for anarchy in all the world's languages begins with 'A', so no problems of recognition or understanding stand in the way. The circle, furthermore, as a symbol of unity and determination, lends support to the oft-proclaimed idea of international anarchist solidarity. This incredible simplicity and directness led to the **(A)** symbol becoming the accepted symbol of the restrengthened anarchist movement after the revolts of 1968. Now it and all its variations adorn not only the most varied pamphlets, but also many buildings and monuments.



FLAG AND STAR: Probably the oldest anarchist symbols are the black flag and the black star. Through their lack of colour they have widely expressed, for many centuries, the will to total overthrow of the dominant social conditions. The flag itself is a symbol uniting formal simplicity with highly emotional appeal. But the flag is not a party flag - as a banner of upheaval and of rebellion it signals the desired end of all authority. The star can have the most varied, but always positive meanings. The black star, used exclusively in five pointed form, embodies the anarchist spirit and unconditional drive towards freedom.



TORCH: The flaming torch, in symbolism-rich political journalism, symbolizes the striving for freedom, or symbolizes already-achieved freedom given as an example to other peoples. Furthermore, as an anarchist symbol, it stands for enlightenment, realization, and ideas of free thought. Occasionally, the

flaming torch is said to be both a light of freedom leading out of the dark oppression and exploitation, and also an illustration of the creative spirit, rising phoenix-like from the destruction of all forms of domination.

FIST: The clenched fist, which as a symbol of class struggle consciously emits aggression, is used only sparsely in anarchist iconography, and then clearly when aimed at intimidating the class enemy. So the fist is mainly found as a graphic representation of the call to smash all instruments of domination. A plain fist holding a black rose is sometimes used by anarchists as a symbol of solidarity. Two fists breaking a rifle are more commonly used in anti-militarist propaganda in order to lend more force to the slogan 'Down with the weapons'.



ANARCHO: Probably the most original anarchist symbol is the Anarcho, a little man dressed totally in black with a cloak down to the ground and a wide-brimmed magician's hat, who is used both self ironically by anarchists and derogatorily by their opponents.



Often there are pictures of the anarcho fumbling around with a bomb, the fuse already alight. The symbol of 'the black man' originates from the time of the Italian independence struggle in the 1830's. It represents a fighter from the Secret Federation of the Carbonari (charcoal burners), which was then struggling for Italian unity against the various forces of occupation. In their uncounted uprisings and assassination attempts they used round bombs which were shot from cannon-like devices. After the freeing of Italy from the centuries of foreign rule the Carbonari continued their struggle against domination.

The symbol of the bomb-throwing Anarcho found its greatest use in anarchist propaganda in the era of 'propaganda by deed' around the turn of the century, where sometimes simply a bomb with a burning wick was represented.

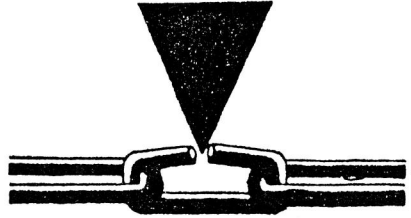
WILDCAT: The symbol of the wildcat has been used since the 1920's solely in Anglo - America, where it was used as a call to 'wild strike'. It was used in the early stages of the North American worker's movement by the Wobblies (International Workers of the World).

Today a group of anarchists in Britain draw wildcat comics for the anarchist monthly paper *Freedom*.



SABOT: Also from North America, but known only in the early days of the labour movement, was the wooden shoe. During strikes workers threw these shoes known as 'sabots' (read saboh) into machinery to bring it to a halt. In this way SABOTage was introduced as a means of struggle

in the conflict between Labour and Capital. The sabot appeared in anarchist publications until the 1930's as a symbol of the call to sabotage. Today it is not used, a fact probably due to the lack of anarchist strength in the revolutionary workers' movement.



NEW SYMBOLS: More recently individual anarchist groups have tried creating new symbols. These reach back in their form at least to the cubism of the 1920's and 30's. The symbol of a wedge splitting a chain is seen as the only successful, strongly abstract design. Comrades in the Federation Anarchiste drew it in Paris, 1981, on the anti-election festival '10 hours of anarchy'. In any case it is exceedingly doubtful that any new symbol will any reason be able to catch on. The symbolism of the  cannot be beaten!

Translated from German
Originally printed in Trafik,
Internationales Journal zur
Kulture der Anarchie, nr. 14,
Oktober 1984, Muhlheim W. Germany.
And ripped-off from RED & BLACK

STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION?

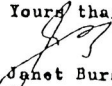
22 October 1974

A.N.U. Students Association
Box 4, G.P.O. Canberra,
A.C.T. 2600

Comrades,

At Macquarie this year, there has been growing evidence of dissatisfaction with the Students' Council among students, and many people, especially the Anarchists' Association, are advocating that the Students' Council should be abolished and that a students' association should be set up. If you could please send us a copy of your constitution with a few comments on its effectiveness and deficiencies, as soon as possible, we would find it of much assistance in reaching satisfactory solutions to our problems.

Yours thankfully,


Janet Burstall
Honorary Secretary
Macquarie University Students' Co

The articles printed here were both written about the same time 13 years ago, and they illustrate just how little Students Council has changed during that time. Despite obvious, and in many cases, vocal dissatisfaction with MUSC, the councillors have done very little to change the institution of Students Council. An executive member of the 19th MUSC recently stated; 'We're lucky it isn't a Student Representative Council (SRC) because we're not representative'. Here lies the fault in a Students Council. A classic example of the anti-democratic manipulations of student politicians occurred in 1985; Arun Kendall, who

At present over a third of the students on this body have been appointed without any referral to the wishes of the general student population on campus. Apparently it was deemed inappropriate that these candidates should have to face even a front lawn meeting of students. These people made no policy statements, either spoken or written, prior to their taking up positions on Council. Such actions on the part of an organisation that claims to be custodian of student rights and representative of student views and interests, is a blatant abuse of the concepts and ideals

achieved the highest individual vote, thus deserving the chairperson's position, was number crunched from this position by the Communist Party left. On top of this, the 1986-7 MUSC appointed themselves to the council: the student population never had a say.

With this in mind it is not surprising that returned questionnaires for the **Alternative Calendar** have remarks (in reply to the question 'What do you think of Macquarie University Student's Council') like, 'Student's what?', 'too cliquey', 'sack them', etc. We could continue *ad-nauseum*, but it is obvious already that a problem exists with Student's Council. This problem is inherent in the structure of Students Council which institutionalises 'representative democracy'. The Anarchist Students Union rejects representative democracy. We advocate 'participatory democracy', specifically in the form of a 'Students' Association'.

W H A T I S A

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

A students association works on the principle of participatory democracy, as apposed to the representative democracy of Students Council. Decisions are made by the members of the association rather than by elected 'representatives' who do not have to answer to the wider student body.

A students association, like a students council, has elected officers, but unlike a students council, these officers are directly elected. This ensures that a situation such as that in 1985 cannot arise. Officers are answerable to

and recallable by their departments (e.g. womens' officer, overseas student officer). Other office holders, such as president, secretary, treasurer, etc. are elected by the wider student body. They play an organisational ('pro-bouleutic', if you like) role in the students association, having no more power than other members.

The point of a students association is that it gives all members voting rights. At the moment a students council, dominated by the independent/Communist Party left, makes decisions with no consultation to the student body at all, save the occasional (token) general meeting of students. (It should be noted that MUSC is not bound by decisions made at a G.M.S., and that moves are being made to limit the power that general meetings do have). 'The Left' (or that element of the left that is associated with Students Council, which is by no means 'the left' on campus) have made ordinance changes to Students Council elections so that it is now based on Proportional Representation rather than a first-past-the-post representative system. While this is a valuable move toward a more democratic student forum, it is by no means the final goal. We should be able to represent ourselves and to vote in our own interests, rather than forfeit these rights to a representative. What is to stop an elected representative acting in hers or his own

interests, rather than in those of her or his electorate? Nothing! The problem with a representative system is that there is no accountability. (unless a representative agrees to be bound by caucus which is rarely the case).

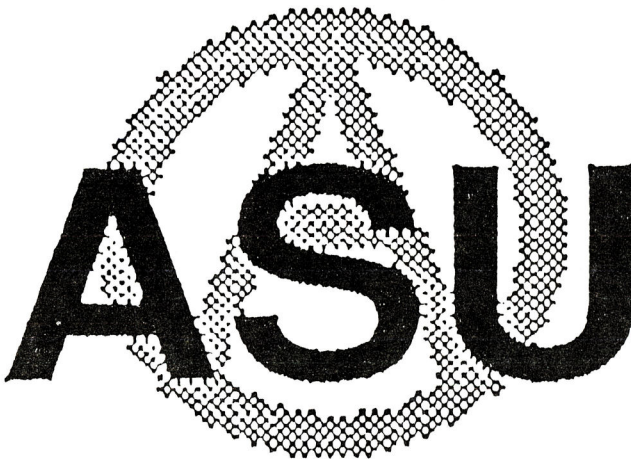
The only valid representative system is where recallable delegates are elected by people to represent them. At the moment, however, we have no choice. Nor for that matter, has the knowledge to make that choice been made available by those who possess it. Relatively few students know of the existence of Students Council, let alone of functional alternatives to it.

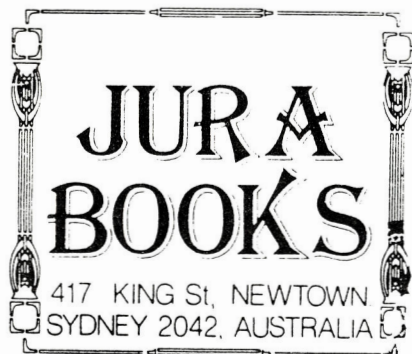
An important aim for the future is to give students the opportunity to make

that choice at a referendum. This of course is a long term aim, as it requires an extensive information campaign emphasizing the differences between a students council and a students association, and the desirability of the latter.

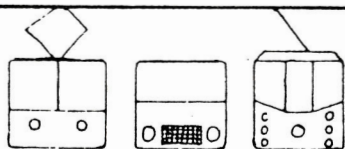
A students association, then, is a far more egalitarian student forum than a students council. It allows all students to play a valid role in their own affairs, rather than have the Liberals, or the Broadleft, or Student Unity, act in their own interests, having been given their position by the broader student body.

In conclusion, this question should be asked: **If it is humiliating to be led, how much more degrading is it to chose our masters?**





SPARKS



Anarcho-Syndicalist
Transport Workers Paper

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